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Volume 64

Article 6

1-1-1977

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Recommended Citation

Prestmon, R. and Wray, Paul H. (1977) "Forestry Extension in Iowa- Present Focus and Future Trends," *Ames Forester*: Vol. 64 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/amesforester/vol64/iss1/6>

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Forestry Extension in Iowa

Present Focus and Future Trends

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Forestry extension in Iowa has thoroughly re-examined its educational role in recent years. Traditionally, extension programs have focused on woodlot management for timber production, windbreak establishment and care, Christmas plantation establishment, and timber processing. During the past 10 years, a program element relating to proper use of wood in building construction was added. Beginning in 1974, major program emphasis has shifted and now presents some differences both in type or program and in concentration of resources.

Staffing pattern and personnel have been adjusted to meet revised objectives. The forestry extension staff consists of two professionals plus one half-time graduate assistant. Each of the two professionals holds a 75 percent extension appointment; one has a 25 percent teaching appointment and the other has a 25 percent research appointment. This limited staffing requires careful allocation of time and other resources to specific programs if maximum impact is to be realized.

Currently approximately 25 percent of staff time is devoted to woodland management and tree plantings. Impetus for continued strong input into this program area was provided by the recent forest

survey results. Iowa lost approximately 1.5 million acres of land classified as forest during the past 20 years. This program element focuses attention on management of wooded areas for a variety of uses (timber production, recreation, aesthetics, erosion control, wildlife production), timber marketing, plantation and windbreak establishment, and proper use of native lumber. Information delivery systems include conventional, meeting-room educational sessions as well as field days and demonstrations. Interest in forestry in Iowa has increased rather dramatically in recent years; for example, forestry field days held at two state forests during 1976 each drew an audience of 75 people. An additional two forestry field days are scheduled during the fall of 1977.



Another important program element to which we have allocated 20 percent of total forestry extension effort is continuing education programs for professionals. Forestry extension has provided training for most of the field staff of the Soil Conservation Service during the past year. We have sponsored an annual continuing education session for the forestry section of the Iowa Conservation Commission. Forestry training for county and area extension field staff is also a priority program. In cooperation with the Iowa Conservation Commission, forestry extension sponsored a week-long hardwood lumber grading short course in 1975, 1976, and 1977 for processors and distributors. The thrust in this part of the forestry extension program is toward multiplying efforts by wholesaling information.

Approximately one-fifth of staff time has been allocated to proper use of forest products in building construction. Area conferences in different parts of the state have been organized for home builders, material suppliers, and financing institutions. Six area conferences have been held this past year with an average of about 75 people. A topic of real interest today relates to energy conservation;

the merits of wood and frame construction have been discussed at many of these programs. Proper use of wood in new construction and maintenance of wood in housing have been considered at several meetings for the consumer. Several support publications have been developed.

Conservation education for youth has consumed approximately 15 percent of staff time. The two major efforts in the work with youth include our participation in the Career Workshop at the Trees for Tomorrow Environmental Center at Eagle River, Wisconsin, and the Iowa 4-H Conservation Workshop. The Trees for Tomorrow Career Workshop involves cooperation with two other universities and permits participation by 20 outstanding Iowa high school juniors. The Iowa Bankers Association cooperates in the support of this program. The 4-H Conservation Workshop also provides an excellent opportunity to educate youth on forestry. In addition, forestry extension participates in several outdoor classrooms for elementary, junior high and senior high boys and girls each year.



A new, multidiscipline Community Tree Program was initiated in 1976. This program is designed to assist small Iowa communities improve and expand public tree resources. Several extension specialists from different departments on campus have been involved in this effort. During the first year, a total of 20 different meetings were held in 13 Iowa communities. It is projected that about 10 to 20 new communities will be involved each year. Forestry extension has taken a leadership role in this educational endeavor; 20 percent of our time is allocated to this effort.

The residual time is primarily consumed by handling specific requests for information through personal counseling and answering letters. In addition, radio and TV programs are presented periodically. Major efforts have been made toward the

development of supporting forestry extension pamphlets in recent years; forestry extension has also developed a new mode for providing specific information through "Forestry Extension Notes."

Specific federal legislation has been proposed to expand forestry extension throughout the country. If increased funding permits expansion of staffing, forestry extension in Iowa is likely to focus those additional resources on community tree programs and on conservation education.

The future is bright for forestry extension in Iowa. We are convinced a major contribution is currently being made and expanded opportunities are ahead.

